



Southampton
Solent
University

Appointment of an Independent Governor

Southampton Solent University

 www.solent.ac.uk

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Welcome

Thank you very much for expressing an interest in the governorship of Southampton Solent University.

With a strong track record of innovation and creativity, Solent has grown to become one of the leading new universities, with strong local roots as well as a renowned international reputation. We have embedded ties in the city, local region and beyond, and strive to make a significant contribution to the communities we serve, while putting our students at the heart of everything we do.

The University recently achieved its highest-ever national ranking, in the Guardian University Guide 2026, climbing an impressive 28 places to reach 58th in the UK . This places us third among the top 10 biggest risers nationally. This recognition is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellent teaching and support, and to the exceptional talent and dedication of our staff and students. This milestone follows our recent TEF Gold award, further affirming Solent's position as a university delivering outstanding student experiences.

In this appointment to our Board of Governors, we are seeking an accomplished individual with a strong and credible track record in Higher Education. Bringing well-honed insight, sector knowledge and strategic perspective, the successful appointee will play a key role in helping the Board navigate the evolving opportunities and challenges facing the sector. They will also act as a visible and influential ambassador for the University, championing our mission and values within the wider community.

If you would like to join our Board of Governors at Solent, I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Richard Smith
Chair

Richard Smith
Chair

About us

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Skills. Experience. Connections. Knowledge. For a future full of possibilities.

Solent University is all about creating opportunities: for its students, for its staff, for its partners. It offers expertise and experiences you couldn't get anywhere else, opening doors and making introductions.

We're focused on the practical side of higher education – giving our students the connections, experience and confidence to turn their newfound knowledge into a career with real, meaningful impact. Whoever you are, whatever your goals, we want to help you make your mark.

We are dedicated to the pursuit of university education that enables learners from all backgrounds to become enterprising citizens and responsible leaders. We are committed to promoting economic and social prosperity for the communities we serve.

Put simply – we want Solent graduates to be the passionate, creative professionals of the future, bringing expertise and energy into their communities and workplaces

- To view our 2035 Strategy Ready for the Future, **please click [here](#).**
- To view our 2023-2024 financial statements, **please click [here](#).**
- For facts and figures about the University, **please click [here](#).**
- **Click [here](#)** for more information on the University **and [here](#)** to view our organisational chart.
- **Click [here](#)** to listen to Justine Greening's podcast, part of her Fit for Purpose Coalition, where she interviews Solent's Vice-Chancellor on our commitment to social mobility and innovation.



The role

Independent Governor (AQ3422)

The Board and the University

- **Responsibilities of the Board of Governors**

- The Board of Governors acts in accordance with the instruments and articles of governance of the University, the conditions of registration for higher education in England and with the University's internal regulations and policies and should seek advice from the Pro Vice-Chancellor Students and Governance or the Clerk to the Governors in any case of uncertainty.
- The Board of Governors exercises collective responsibility, making decisions corporately by all members acting as a body.
- From time to time, Governors may be formally or informally involved in the process for the recruitment of new members of the Board of Governors.

- **Standards**

- Board members are required to conduct themselves in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.
- Board members shall declare any conflict of interest in order that the integrity of Governing Body business shall be seen to be maintained.
- Board members are required to annually complete and file a satisfactory 'fit and proper' person declaration.
- Governors will make themselves available to attend induction and training events organised by the University or other appropriate bodies.
- Governors will attend all meetings of which they are a member, or give timely apologies if absence is unavoidable.

- **The business of the University**

- The Board of Governors exercises control over the strategic direction of the University, through an effective planning process, and assesses the performance of the University against the objectives which the Board of Governors has approved. [View our 2035 strategy here.](#)
- Governors should establish and maintain a constructive and supportive but challenging working relationship with the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG), recognising the proper separation between governance and executive management, and avoiding involvement in the day-to-day executive management of the University.
- Governors are required to join at least one Committee of the Board: Audit, Governance, People and Culture, Finance and Resources, or Remuneration.
- Independent Governors are encouraged to attend degree award ceremonies and participate in other University events such as Open Days.

- **The external role**

- Governors may be asked to use personal influence and networking skills on behalf of the University.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

You will play a key role in guiding and overseeing the strategic direction, governance, and management of Southampton Solent University. As a Governor, you will be a member of the Board which oversees Southampton Solent University's policies, ensuring its financial sustainability and upholding its academic standards. You will demonstrate a commitment to excellence in higher education, strong leadership skills, and the ability to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders. Diversity is core to the identity and mission of Southampton Solent University and to this appointment process. We are particularly interested in candidates with senior experience in Higher Education; whether this has been gained as an Executive or Non-Executive.

Essential criteria

- A strong personal commitment to higher education and the values, aims and objectives of the University.
- At all times act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.
- A strong understanding of the application of principles of good governance.
- The ability to work in a team, which has both executive, non-executive members and student body representatives.
- The ability to analyse and review complex issues and weigh up conflicting opinions.
- The ability to explain both orally and in writing reasons for arriving at decisions.
- Understanding of strategic planning and resource management.
- A commitment to engaging positively and openly with students, staff, the public and diverse other stakeholders.
- Commitment to the Solent Values: Respect, Inclusivity, Integrity, Ownership, Engagement and Teamwork.

Desirable criteria

- Experience gained in an area of expertise directly relevant to the University's activities.
- International experience.
- Experience of non-executive directorships and an understanding of not-for-profit/charitable sector objectives.

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Terms of appointment

- The role is voluntary, although reasonable expenses such as travel will be reimbursed.
- The appointment is for an initial term of three years and may be renewed for a further and term of three years by agreement of the Board of Governors.
- The Board meets four times per year on campus in the evening, and there is also an annual awayday meeting.
- Committees generally meet four times per year in the evening, with at least one meeting per year on campus.
- Board members are also invited to attend other events, including graduation ceremonies, exhibitions, open days, etc.

Details of upcoming meeting dates can be found [here](#)

How to apply

Anderson Quigley is acting as an employment advisor to Solent University, Southampton. An executive search process is being carried out by Anderson Quigley in addition to the public advertisement.

Should you wish to discuss the role in strict confidence, please contact Helene Usherwood at helene.usherwood@andersonquigley.com or +44 (0)7719 322 669 or Carolyn Coates, Research Consultant – carolyn.coates@andersonquigley.com +44 (0)7825 871 944

The closing date for applications is **Friday 09 January**

Applications should consist of:

- A full CV.
- A covering letter setting out your interest in the role and details of how you match the criteria outlined in the person criteria.
- Details of two referees, though please note that we will not approach your referees without your prior consent and only should you be shortlisted.

Timetable

Closing date

Friday 9 January

Preliminary interviews with AQ

Monday 12 - Friday 23 January

Shortlist Meeting

Monday 9 February

Final Panel Interviews

16 February (1:00 - 17:00)